Analysis of Primary School Curriculum of Turkey, Finland, and Ireland in Terms of Media Literacy Education

Belgin TANRIVERDİ, Özlem APAK***

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the implications of Media Literacy Education (MLE) in Turkey by analyzing the Primary School Curricula in terms of MLE comparatively in Turkey, Ireland and Finland. In this study, the selection of Finland and Ireland curricula is related with those countries' being the pioneering countries in MLE and the structural differences in their curricula. In other words, the selection of these countries serves as a model in terms of approaching to MLE as a separate course (Turkey), in a strand unit (Ireland) and interdisciplinary manner (Finland). The method used in this study was document analysis. The documents analyzed in the study were the Primary School Curriculum of these countries and also documents, such as reports, books and journals, published by governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on Media Literacy Education. Since a standard MLE for European countries does not exist, the curricula of Primary school education of Turkey, Ireland, and Finland were analyzed and interpreted in terms of (a) general outcomes and learning outcomes of the curricula, (b) content, (c) learning situation (methods and techniques) and (d) assessment and evaluation strategies. This study revealed that in the vision of Primary school curricula of Turkey, there are not any objectives related to MLE unlike Finland and Ireland Curricula. When analyzed the curriculum of each course this study also revealed that the objectives related to MLE are only implemented in Turkish Curriculum (1-5). On the contrary, in Ireland there are objectives related to MLE in English, Visual Arts, Mathematics, Irish language, and mostly in Science and Social Personal and Health (SPHE) curricula and it is included in the objectives of core curriculum in Finland. In addition to this, the objectives and learning outcomes of Turkey's MLE curriculum seems to aim at gaining knowledge and understanding the issues although they are focused on developing attitude, skills and values; and also developing active citizenship, intercultural communication, critical thinking skills and creativity in Finland's and Ireland's curricula. Considering the findings of the study, it is suggested that MLE should be a skill-based teaching rather than a stand-alone subject in Primary school curricula.

Key Words

Media Literacy Education, Primary School Curricula, Turkey, Ireland, Finland.

* *Correspondence*: Assist Prof. Belgin Tanriverdi, University of Kocaeli, Faculty of Education, Educational Sciences Department. Umuttepe Yerleşkesi TR-41380, İzmit, Kocaeli/Turkey.
E-mail: tanriverdi@kocaeli.edu.tr

** Özlem APAK, Research Assistant, University of Kocaeli Faculty of Education Department of Primary School Education. Umuttepe Yerleşkesi TR-41380, İzmit, Kocaeli/Turkey.

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For the most historians and philosophers, the 19th century is accepted as a great transformation era. In that era, in addition to industrial revolution, there were important developments in art and science (Şaylan, 2002: p**.** 18). In the 20th century, after the invention of telephone, radio, and television, the invention of computers made the communication between people, countries, and continents faster (Oktay, 2004: p. 14). These developments in communication systems in addition to globalization have affected people's lives and interaction of countries such as Turkey in terms of social, cultural, and economical aspects. While technology eases our lives, it also causes some harmful effects. In other words, the societies which make the use of technology first become superior to the others (Oktay, 2004: p. 15). Among the values transferred from the 19th century to 20th century, one can mention globalization, being multilingual and multicultural, lifelong learning, learning rather than teaching, economy, population, and democracy. The interaction among those concepts is only provided with education (Oktay, 2004: p.13). As the requirement of information society and new education paradigm we can define educated man as a person learning to learn. For that reason the term literacy has expanded with the concepts of digital literacy, visual literacy, computer literacy, media literacy and so on. With the quote "*Today, media literacy is as central to active and full citizenship as literacy was at the beginning of 19th century*," Reding[2] put forward that expansion and change. In other words, media, as a vital part of our lives, should be integrated into education process.

Livingstone and Bovill (1999) define media literacy as reaching the original source of information, and ability to understand the power, limitations, and shape of the content presented in the media. Ofcom defines media literacy as the ability to access, understand, and create communications in a variety of contexts concerning the *relationship* among textuality, competence and power (Ofcom, 2007). Shetzer and Warschauer state that (2000) becoming literate is not just a matter of learning how to decode letters and words, but rather a matter of mastering processes that are deemed valuable in particular societies, cultures, and contexts. Thoman (2003) defines MLE as a movement in which students both comprehend the messages they receive and utilize these tools effectively to design and distribute their own messages. Silverblatt

2 Information Society and Media Commissioner Viviane Reding . Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1326&f . 02.02.2008

(1995) identifies five key principles of ML: (a) Media literacy empowers individuals to make independent judgments about media consumption (b) Media literacy focuses attention on the elements involved in the media communication (c) Media literacy fosters an awareness of the impact of the media on the individual and society, (d) Media literacy develops strategies with which to analyze and discuss media messages, (e) Media literacy promotes awareness of interactive media content as a "text" that provides insight into our contemporary culture and ourselves, (f) Media literacy cultivates enhanced enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of media content, and (g) Media literacy challenges interactive media communicators to produce effective and responsible media messages. Apart from those principles, MLE also has important effects on citizenship education. It is the more recent discussions arising from the considerations of digital technologies that are the most relevant to contemporary issues relating to literacy, the process of participation and citizenship (Silverstone, 2004: p. 440).

Treske (2006) and Kutoğlu (2006) define MLE as an education process empowering individuals to acquire analyzing, evaluating, criticizing and comparing skills in order to educate people who are aware of their democratic rights as Silverstone mentioned. Moody (2009) explains that an informed citizenry is essential to the effective functioning of democracy. For him, in most modern liberal democracies, citizens have traditionally looked to the media as the primary source of information about socio-political matters. Since it is critical that audiences be able to effectively and accurately use the media to meet their information needs, ML is viewed as a vital skill for a healthy democracy. In a report published by European Commission in 2006, the purpose of MLE curriculum is stated as the awareness education especially for children. Communication experts, therefore, emphasizes the importance of starting an MLE program for children at pre-school education to protect children from the negative sides of the media (Ertürk and Gül, 2006: s. 47). The media education process started at home provides students with understanding media messages, critizing them and creating their own messages. By doing so, individuals learn to transfer what they learn in classroom into real life. As Kerr Stated (2004) Media education should be an entitlement, not a luxury. Therefore, comprehensive media education programs should be initiated and supported from pre-school to university level, and in adult education.

Media literacy has been considered in an international context by UNESCO, in an initiative that began in 1982 with the conference in Grunwald and continued with conferences in Toulouse in 1990, Vienna in 1999 and finally, the fourth, in Seville in 2002. In these conferences, the most emphasized issue is that media literacy is considered to be a very important factor for citizenship in today's information society. It is a life-long skill not only for young generations but also for adults and elderly people, parents, teachers, media professionals. Formal media education plays a vital role in the process of media literacy formation although also informal learning areas will help the life-long learner to become a media literate person (Tanriverdi, 2008). As it can be noticed, MLE is not only understanding and comprehending media messages but also creating their own messages. According to Kubey (1997); Livingstone (2004) and Potter (2001) the differences between MLE curriculum and other curriculum are as follows:

1. ML Curriculum concentrates current and popular culture information resources and teaches individuals to examine them critically.

2. ML curriculum provides teachers and students with a broader perspective on life and education in accordance with the scope of the courses in training institutions.

3. ML curriculum teaches individuals generating ideas as well as using sources of information.

4. ML curriculum contributes to the upbringing of conscious citizens to protect them from unfounded and inconsistent information.

The structures for implementation of Media Education in schools differ from one country to the next in the different EU member and accession states (Koller, Haider and Dall, 2005). That's why it is not possible to mention a standardized curriculum for ML in European countries. However, considering related literature we can conclude some common principles for a ML education compatible with EU objectives.

1. MLE is to teach not only 'through' but also 'about' the media. MLE should include print, film, television, radio, multimedia, the Internet and digital games (Duncan, 2001; Medialit, 2003).

2. It should adopt a competency/skills based approach focused on doing and not just knowing. In other words, media literacy should include media production (Medialit, 2003).

3. Media literacy policy and strategies should apply 3 P's at national level: Protection, Provision and Participation (European Commission, 2006). In other words, media education should not only be approached from a protectionist point of view since there might be problematic media consumption (Duncan, 2001).

4. ML curriculum should take into account 5 C's or core competences: Comprehension, Critical thinking, Creativity, Cross-cultural communication and Citizenship (Europeon Commission, 2006). That's why, ML curriculum details should take into account teaching strategies: Textual readings and analysis, Simulations and role playing, Productions and representations (Duncan, 2001).

5. Ideally, evaluation in Media Education means student self-evaluation, both formative and summative. Indeed, Media Education attempts to change the relationship between teacher and students and taught by offering both objects for reflection and dialogue (Harland, 2004; Masterman, 1997).

Since ML is a developing discipline in Turkey, studies on ML is limited to the importance of MLE or introducing MLE. The reason for not encountering with the experimental studies is partly because of the fact that in most of the primary schools, MLE course is not selected by students. For example, Inceoğlu (2007) stated she limited the participants in her study with two teachers because of that reason. In the study titled "Mapping Media Literacy Education Policies in the World" Orhon (2009) stated that although the importance of MLE was accepted, there were almost no experimental studies about MLE in Turkey. However, there have been some important improvements in MLE in Turkey. For example, in the First Media literacy conference held in 2005, the importance of MLE was emphasized with the presentations. Various books most of which were about MLE or contrastive analysis of MLE in different countries were published. For example: Ertürk & Gül (2006); "Don't make your child television addict. Be media literate", Taşkıran (2007); "Introduction to Media Literacy", Binark & Gencel Bek (2007); "Critical Media Literacy Theoretical Approaches and Practices", Önal (2007); "Media Literacy: A new study area in libraries". In her study, "Media Literacy Education in Balkan Countries: the case of Greece and Turkey" Tanrıverdi (2008) compared the school curricula of these two countries. This study revealed that MLE has not found its way in the curriculum of primary and secondary education in both

countries as it is recommended by some initiatives such as UNESCO, European Council etc. In another study Balaban, Ünal and Küçük (2008) analyzed the learning outcomes of 7th grade ML curriculum in terms of Bloom's taxonomy; the results show that some of the learning outcomes are generally cognitive based rather than affective.

In this study, the curricula of Primary school education of two Pioneer countries on MLE were compared in order to present some ideas about new ideas on MLE in Turkey. Contrastive Education does not aim at finding a solution to countries' problems in a wider perspective analyzing the concepts related to education in different countries (King, 1979). Because it serves different experiences and approaches, it may cause the best solution in education; and educational politics and managers may get benefit from those results in decision making process (King, 1979). For Ergün (1985), it requires to have common evaluation criteria in order to reach scientific results.

Before presenting the main aim and supporting aims of the study, it provides a fruitful data to mention general understanding of the MLE of those countries.

Media Literacy Education in Turkey

Media literacy education started with the attempts of the Radio Television Supreme court (RTÜK) and the National Ministry of Education (MEB) in 2004 with the idea of integrating MLE lesson to the primary school curricula. First ML trainers were educated in a course held by RTÜK in Ankara (MEB, 2006). The pilot study for MLE started in five cities in 2006/2007 educational year and it became widespread in the following year. ML course is an elective course in the second phase of primary education (MEB, 2006).

ML course is prepared according to the principles of constructive approach (MEB, 2006). In ML classes, the targeted skills that students acquire are making observations, making research, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, problem solving, using information technology, entrepreneurship, social and cultural participation, effective and accurate use of Turkish (MEB, RTÜK, 2006: p. 8). Targeted values that students acquire are the value of private life, respects for the privacy, ethical awareness, honesty, responsibility, commitment to ethical conduct, respect for differences, the awareness for cultural heritage,

to respect for the communication within the family life, conscious consumption, active participation to social life, being scientific, equality, solidarity, and sharing (MEB, RTÜK, 2006: p. 9).

The activities in the curriculum are example of suggestions and teachers can use them, or they can add other activities. Activities should be prepared according to the student achievement, course content, environmental features, and also students' interests are also highlighted in the curriculum. For example, it is aimed that students' being active in the process of learning by explaining their views, questioning, transferring their knowledge to the other friends rather than reading books or listening to the teacher to learn or develop skills (MEB, RTÜK, 2006, p. 9). The suggested evaluation and assessment activities used in this course are student-centered ones such as interviewing, observation, and oral presentation, performance evaluation, preparing projects, self-evaluation, peer evaluation and portfolio assessment. (MEB, RTÜK, 2006: p.18). Media literacy course is not evaluated by grades but if the student takes the course or not is specified in students' records.

Media Literacy Education in Ireland

In Ireland, MLE is defined as Critical Media Literacy Education. Media have become intertwined with people's professional, civic, personal lives; a media literacy orientation suggests that the primary purpose of media education should be to educate students broadly (Christ & Potter, 1998: p. 9). Media literacy is, according to educationalists, well grounded in the new primary curriculum in Ireland. The new curriculum was launched in September 2000 and has now completed its first review phase which took place in the 2003/2004 school year. This phase assessed teacher and student experience of the English, Visual Arts, and Mathematics curricula. The second review phase is ongoing and will address the Irish language, Science and Social Personal, and Health (SPHE) provisions.

Media education is specifically provided in SPHE which consists of three strands: 'Myself', 'Myself and Others' and 'Myself and the Wider World.' The final strand contains two themes –'Developing Citizenship' and 'Media Education.' There is a dual emphasis at this level which is split between protection and empowerment. For example, teacher guidelines state that children are encouraged to 'examine the media in a critical way and to explore how they can influence behavior and opinion' while at the

same time they are to be 'given opportunities to explore the range of information available to them through information and communication Technologies (NCCA, 2004: p. 9). The first review phase of the primary curriculum has produced recommendations centered on the provision of ICT. These focus on the importance of understanding the potential of ICT to support and enhance the integrated nature of the primary curriculum (NCCA 2004: p. 10) as well as making specific reference to the value of enhancing visual literacy through the Visual Arts strand of the curriculum. As part of the review process, the NCCA also produced a DVD for parents entitled The What Why and How of Children's Learning in Primary School which seeks to provide an insight into the classroom and curriculum at primary level and offers suggestions for parents to support their children's education. The second phase of the review is ongoing currently with data available in early 2008. This phase will offer information on the responses to and experiences of the SPHE strand, which includes a dedicated Media Education theme (Thoman & Jolls, 2005: p.16.

Media Literacy Education in Finland

Over the years, various concepts have been applied to media education. There was a mention of newspaper teaching in which Finland was a pioneer, especially after the 1960s, and of film teaching. Such concepts frequently portray in a very concrete manner the activities of each in a certain medium. The 1970s witnessed the coining of mass media education and audiovisual education. Whatever name media education goes by, it has often been accompanied by civic education (as of the 1960s), mass entertainment education (in the 1970s), and creativity education (in the 1980s). In the 1980s the theory and practice of media education were augmented by audiovisual education, which was provided, for example, in municipal video workshops. In the 1990s, horizons expanded to research on various viewer groups and children's own perspective on media use gained a foothold in research. Interest arose in the use of information technology in teaching and in the schools ADP clubs were replaced by ADP lessons forming part of the curriculum. At the beginning of the new millennium, the situation in media education and practice is complex indeed (Kupainen, Sintonen and Suoranta, 2008: p. 5).

In the place of the former mass communication, the parlance in media education turned to communication and communication education, including the dimensions pertaining especially to expression and doing. Thus, making videos also became a part of media education and school work. Communications was defined in the bases for the comprehensive school curriculum of 1994 according to the curricular model as interaction concerned with the cognitive, aesthetics and ethics, when communication education was the creation, management and development of this interaction (Kupainen, Sintonen and Suoranta, 2008: p. 14-15). The goals of the cross-curricular theme "Media Skills and Communication" are to improve skills in expression and interaction, to advance understanding of the media's position and importance, and to improve skills in using the media. With respect to communication skills, emphasis is given to participatory, interactive, and community communication. The pupils are to practice media skills as both producers and recipients of messages (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004). In Finland media education is taken also to encompass teaching with the help of media, among others in the media education program of the universities of Lapland and Helsinki.

After these, data obtained from the general school systems of these countries the main and supporting purposes of this study is given. The main objective of this study is to reveal the differences, similarities and commonalities between the primary education curricula that are implemented in Turkey by analyzing the media literacy education in Ireland and Finland comparatively. This study has an important value in terms of making a state of determination concerning the Media Literacy curriculum which has been added as a selective course to Primary education curricula in our country in 2005, making suggestions for adjustments that have to be done in order to reveal the similarities and differences with the ideal programs.

This study aims at making contribution to the Media Literacy education literature that has recently began to grow in Turkey. The main objective of this framework in the sub-goals is presented below:

e. What are the similarities and differences of the general objectives and learning outcomes in the Primary school curricula of Turkey, Ireland, and Finland in terms of media literacy education?

f. What are the similarities and differences of the content in the

Primary school curricula of Turkey, Ireland, and Finland in terms of media literacy education?

g. What are the similarities and differences of the Learning Situation in the Primary school curricula of Turkey, Ireland, and Finland in terms of media literacy education?

h. What are the similarities and differences of the evaluation and assessment strategies in the Primary school curricula of Turkey, Ireland, and Finland in terms of media literacy education?

In present study, all of the Ireland, Turkey and Finland Primary education curricula were analyzed in terms of the similarities and differences concerning MLE. Selection of countries were made according to those countries' being a member or candidate for European Union, exemplifying MLE as a discrete course (Turkey), in a strand unit (Ireland) and interdisciplinary (Finland).

Method

In this study, document analysis was used. Document analysis covers the analysis of written documents which contain information to be investigated. Document analysis could be as a method alone or be used with other data collection tools. The documents analyzed in this study are all of the Primary school curricula of these countries. In the present study, the primary school curricula of Turkey and Finland were compared to each other in terms of MLE. Since it is not possible to mention a standard MLE curriculum in Europe, general objectives and learning outcomes, content, learning situation and evaluation and assessment of the curricula that refer to ML were used towards the purposes of this present study. All the statements related to MLE in the primary school curricula of those countries in the process of the (1) vision and general objectives of the curricula, (2) the content of the curricula, (3) the learning situation of the curricula and (4) evaluation and assessment strategies of the curricula.

In document analysis, the data of results do not need upgrading or quantitative upgrading (Yıldırım & Şimşek; 2006, p. 187). In this study; not the numbers of statements but if the statements take place or not in the documents are a matter of interest there is no quantitative upgrading in the study. In the first review, the statements related to MLE were

examined by "Find" command into a Word or pdf files writing "Media"; and in the second review the concepts associated with the media such as television, radio, internet were carried out in the same way. Each sub-concepts are scanned in different colors (For example, Objectives of the curriculum are scanned in red, content is scanned in green) and then saved in different files.

Results

In this section, the findings of the comparison between the primary education curricula of Turkey, Ireland, and Finland in terms of MLE were given. In comparison to all three countries of the Primary Education Curricula were examined in the aspects: (1) Objectives and Learning Outcomes, (2) Content, (3) Learning Situation and (4) Evaluation and Assessment in addition to the criteria mentioned in Introduction part.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes

As mentioned in Introduction, objectives and learning outcomes should adopt a competency/skills based approach focused on doing and not just knowing. General outcomes related to media literacy should apply 3 P's at national level: Protection, Provision, and Participation; and it should take into account 5 C's or core competences: Comprehension, Critical thinking, Creativity, Cross-cultural communication, and Citizenship.

In Turkey, there is no statement related to MLE included in the vision of the primary education curricula. However, it is possible to mention that ML is associated with the two overall objectives in Turkish Curriculum (1-5): *"Reading by using Information technology, setting up the meaning between the texts and developing learning skill*s" and *"to ensure that they can criticize the inquiry which is transferred by mass media."* Both objectives can be said to develop skills and values rather than acquiring knowledge only.

MLE starts in the secondary part (12-14 years) of primary school as a discrete elective course titled "Media literacy education" in Turkey. The objectives of the selective media literacy course were presented below:

1. He develops conscious by filtering the messages in the media and becomes a sensitive person to his environment and the problems in his nation.

2. He develops skills for analyzing, evaluating and transferring the messages produced in television, video, film, advertising, print, internet, etc.
3. He develops a critical perspective towards written, visual, and audio media.
4. He develops a change towards asking questions process from finding answers for producing and analyzing the messages.
5. He becomes a conscious media literate individual.
6. He participates in social life more actively and constructively.
7. He develops contribution for creating a more positive awareness into public and private broadcasting (MEB, RTÜK, 2006 p. 7-8).

The overall objectives of ML lesson is generally based on developing skills, attitudes, and values; and appropriate for increasing individuals' awareness rather than protecting them. However, some of the expressions in general objectives have very broad sense and how these issues are provided was not clearly stated. For example; *"He becomes a conscious media literate person"* is not a deliberate statement and it covers almost all the objectives of the course. Similarly, in the seventh objective, *"He develops contribution for creating a more positive awareness into public and private broadcasting"* is not very clear how the primary school students achieve this goal and contribute public and private broadcasting. In addition to meaning disorder, it is not clearly stated that with which of the following learning outcomes students can achieve the first objective, *"He develops conscious by filtering the messages in the media and becomes a sensitive person to his environment and the problems in his nation"*. Similarly, the general objective *"He participates in social life more actively and constructively"* was not specified with which of the following learning outcomes were associated. The general objectives associated with ML are very broad and are not possible to achieve within solely media literacy education but could be achieved in the vision of general objectives or vision of the primary education curricula.

General objectives in ML curriculum are related to getting information and understanding issues. For example: "*He gives examples classifying the types communication*"; "*He recognizes communication and notices its elements*"; "*He distinguishes types of television programs, in accordance with its objectives, functions and features"; "He describes the mass media classifying*

mass communication tools ";"He recognizes the media classifying its functions "; " He recognizes basic concepts related to the newspapers"; "He classifies the types of magazines in accordance with the content and published periods". In addition to these learning outcomes, there are some learning outcomes related to developing high order skills such as: "*He analyzes the impact of media on social, cultural and economic life"; "He analyzes the impact of television as an effective redirection of mass means of communication on the individual and society"; "He comprehends television watching habits and its results in the accompanying with their research comments", "He analyzes the relationship between newspapers and the news images*". It is possible to mention that there are some application-oriented learning outcomes related to producing media messages even they are very limited. For example: "*He prepares a sample newspaper*", and "*He performs activities such as accessing information reading news, chatting, e-mailing, distance education on the Internet*" Among achievements some protect oriented expressions are also included. For instance: "*He identifies problem areas of television broadcasting and improves suggestions about protection from the negative sides of it", "He recognizes and takes into account warning symbols"*, and *"He identifies problem areas of radio broadcasting and improves suggestions about protection from the negative sides of it*". It is unlikely to state that there are learning outcomes focused on participation and provision as well as protection.

In general, when the learning outcomes were examined it can be stated that although there are some outcomes related to developing skills, attitudes, and values, they are mostly based on understanding issues and getting knowledge. Learning outcomes are focused on protectionist view rather than provision and participation; although some learning outcomes are included related to developing students' critical thinking skills there is almost no learning outcome related to intercultural dialogue, creativity and active citizenship.

Unlike Turkish primary education curricula, one statement related to MLE is included in the vision of the Irish primary school curricula. This statement is related to "media awareness" which means that being aware of, and using information available to us through all sorts of media; and also becoming aware of the potential impact of media in influencing our personal views, choices and decisions (NCCA; 2004). Media Education is given in a theme within SPHE and it is taught starting from pre-school period until the end of sixth grade (Curriculum Online: 1999).

The learning outcomes in Media Education theme is given as follows: (1) become familiar with different media; (2) explore how prejudice and partiality can distort information; (3) explore some of the techniques used in the media, (4) examine how these techniques are used in promoting particular ideas or in selling particular products; (5) look at the media in a critical way by asking questions, exploring perspectives, and examining bias, (6) begin to investigate advertising and marketing strategies and practice using some of these approaches for themselves; (7) become discerning about the messages they receive from different media sources; (8) examine how families and relationships are portrayed in the media, how conflicts are resolved, and how intimacy and sexuality are represented; and (9) examine the effects of advertising on various aspects of life, for example on purchasing, dietary habits, health behavior and life-style.

When the curriculum of each lesson is examined, it can be said that learning outcomes are related to developing attitude, skills, and understanding rather than understanding issues and getting knowledge. For example: "*realize that he/she receives information from many different sources; "identify favorite television programs, videos and video games and indicate reasons for preference"; "begin to explore and talk about the differences between advertisements and programs"; "begin to distinguish between fact and fiction in stories or situations in different media forms"; "begin to use and explore the various kinds of information technology available; explore and use some simple broadcasting, production and communication techniques"; "explore popular stories, books and rhymes and discuss some of the characters and their appealing traits."* Apart from SPHE curriculum, there are also some learning outcomes related to ML in the other lessons. In mother tongue education "to *develop a sense of discrimination with regard to the use of language and images in the media*"; in Reading Lesson "*distinguish between fact and opinion, and bias and objectivity, in text and in the media*" in Art and Design Lesson (Grades 5- 6); "*select and work with traditional and digital media*" in Geography "*Develop an ability to acquire, analyze and communicate geographical knowledge using a wide variety of sources, including oral, written and graphical forms, models and globes, information technology and other media*", in pre-school education and also in the 1st and 2nd grades "to *describe and discuss observations orally using an expanding vocabulary represent findings pictorially or using other media.* . In Music lesson there is also a theme titled "Media Awareness" (NCCA, 2004).

As it can be seen from the examples, the objectives and learning outcomes related to MLE is based on developing skills, values and attitudes as well as understanding issues and getting knowledge; and also they include intercultural communication, creativity and active citizenship and critical thinking skills.

In Finland, Media Education is accepted as an important part of the educational system (Lundvall, 2009; p.13). There are some statements related to MLE included in the vision of the Finnish primary school curricula such as "*Become a responsible communicator and media literate person", "to learn media critique and to define ethical and aesthetic values in communication", "and to learn to affect participation, interaction and communication*", and *"to be technically skillful in terms in media and communication."* In Finland, one of the cross-curricular themes is "Media Skills and Communication" and the goal of it is to improve skills in expression and interaction, to advance understanding of the media's position and importance, and to improve skills in using the media. The objectives of this theme are as follows:

The pupils will learn to

1. express themselves in a versatile, responsible way, and to interpret communication by others
2. develop their information management skills, and to compare, choose, and utilize acquired information
3. take a critical stance towards contents convoyed by the media, and to ponder the related values of ethics and aesthetics in communication
4. produce and transmit messages, and use the media appropriately
5. use media and communication tools in information acquisition and transmission, and in various interactive situations.

As it can be seen, objectives related to ML are based on explaining, comprehending, critical thinking, using the information for his own sake and producing media messages. These are the objectives and learning outcomes in different grades and courses. Mother Tongue Education (Grades 1-2): "*develop their reading and writing skills, including their media literacy, as well as their communication capabilities in an information-technology learning environment (…) their media skills; their media literacy will suffice to follow programs directed at their age group*"; (Grades 3-5) "*gain a basic knowledge of the media and utilize*

communications media purposefully" "(…)have also acquainted themselves with the fiction of film and theatre, and fiction created through other media.", (Grades 6-8) "*The task of the instruction is to encourage the pupil to read and evaluate literature, including various media texts, "Reflecting on one's own skills in reading communication, and use of the media", "The pupils' relationship with language, literature, and other culture will deepen gain further experience with techniques of expression used in theatre and film", "read and understand various text, including media texts, and employ functional reading strategies, "Recognize genres of normal fictional text and different styles of factual and media texts- new reports, advertisement, and various articles in particular- and be able to take an analytical and critical stance towards them", "be able to form his own texts by the help of the media";* in Second Language Lesson (Grades 7-9): "*to be willing to follow topic-based texts in the mass media*", in Social science lesson (Grades 7-9) "*to be able to analyze media texts, statistics and graphic presentations*". In Visual Arts lesson (Grades 1-4) "*to be able to understand how to benefit from the books, newspapers, internet as a source of information*", and "*to know how to use the media, media tools to make their own decisions and opinions*", Visual Arts lesson: "*examining the intended use of an image in the media; structural and content analysis of media presentation", "analysis of films and televisions programs in graphic design combining image and word fundamentals of typography and make-up*", in the 7th grade in Health Education "*The pupils will assess the importance of the environment, one's way of life, culture, and the media from the perspective of safety and health*".

It can be said that these learning outcomes coincide with the general aims of the curriculum and are based on understanding issues as well as developing values, attitudes, and skills. Generally speaking, in Turkey, there is no statement related to MLE included in the vision of the primary education curricula unlike Finland or Ireland. In Turkish primary education, learning outcomes are generally based on understanding issues, and sometimes developing skills, and values. The overall objectives of media literacy lesson is generally based on developing skills, attitudes and values; and appropriate for increasing individuals' awareness rather than protecting them in Ireland and Finland. Learning outcomes are focused on a protectionist view rather than provision and participation in Turkey, which is not the same in Ireland and Finland curriculum. Although some learning outcomes are related to developing students' critical thinking skills in Turkish

curricula, there is almost no learning outcome related to intercultural dialogue, creativity and active citizenship. Moreover, the learning outcomes in ML course in Turkey are relatively broad. For instance, under the statement of *"One will be a conscious media literacy writer"*, a variety of competences could be mentioned. In Ireland's Curriculum, on the other hand, more narrowed-down statements such as *"Should I buy what I need or what I want?"* exist and this statement can be accepted as a part of being a conscious consumer.

Content Knowledge

The content related to ML Curriculum is not specified in primary education curriculum in Turkey. The lesson consists of eight units and the distribution of units and hours for the lesson is as follows:

1. Introduction to Communication (2 hours - 8%)
2. Mass Communication (2 hours - 8%)
3. Media (7 hours - 17%)
4. Television (4 hours – 12.5%)
5. Family, Children and television (9 hours - 17%)
6. Radio (3 hours - 8%)
7. Newspaper and Magazine (3 hours - 17%)
8. Internet (6 hours – 12, 5 %) (MEB, RTÜK, 2006: 10).

The majority of topics taught in MLE consist of mass media tools such as television and the internet probably because they are used extensively in public.

Media education is included in "Myself and the wider world" in a strand unit titled "Media Education" in Ireland (Curriculum Online, 1999). The content is determined by the teachers in accordance with the criteria given in the curriculum as follows: Creating a positive school climate and atmosphere, building effective communication within the school, catering for individual needs, creating a health-promoting physical environment, developing democratic processes, enhancing self-esteem, fostering respect for diversity, fostering inclusive and respectful language, developing appropriate communication between home and school, and developing a school approach to assessment. For Example,

in the third and fourth grades the content was given as an example: different ways in which information can be transmitted and learn to be discerning and selective about this information, with particular regard to language, behavior, authenticity and attitudes, discuss and explore television, radio, videos, computer games, the internet (worldwide web and e-mail) and other media; advertising and its purpose and nature begin to explore some of the techniques that are used in marketing and advertising; some issues that are frequently raised in the media, the way they are portrayed and the accuracy of these presentations.

In Finland, Media Education is taught in a cross-curricular theme titled Media Skills and Communication. The content accordance with the objectives and learning outcomes are as follows:

1. Expression of one's own thoughts and feelings, various languages of expression, and their use in different situations
2. Analysis and interpretation of the content and purpose of messages, change in the communication environment, and multimedia communication
3. The media's role and influence in society, and the relationship between reality and the world depicted by the media
4. Working with the media
5. Data security, freedom of speech, and critiquing sources
6. Tools of communications technology, their diversified use, and internet ethics (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004).

When analyzed content dimension, the content is highly constructed upon media products and the ability of using media products is prioritized in Turkey. In Ireland, the aim is to protect the individual from the negative effects of media's dominant effect by raising the individuals consciously. However in Finland, understanding and interpreting the media by associating with other courses is at the forefront, advertising and marketing techniques, computer games, internet ethics, the language of media, in Ireland; Picture and photo analysis, recording from video, radio and television, newspapers captions and headlines, media history, graphics and symbols in media, writing radio and television programs etc. Although these topics are not included in the content of the curriculum, some of them are suggested speaking topics in Turkish curriculum.

Learning Situation Knowledge

Buckingham states that (1998) media education should present through a more student-centered point of view in a critical learning environment starting from existing knowledge and media experience of young people rather than protection of the individual. Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action (Paul & Scriven, 2008). In order to develop students' critical thinking skills, student-centered methods such as reading and analyzing texts, role playing, simulations should be used.

In the guide for MLE teachers prepared by TTKB and RTÜK, it is emphasized that in order to develop critical thinking skills teachers should use methods and techniques in the classes focused on both knowledge and skills and considering differences between students and their environments (MEB, RTÜK, 2006: p. 5). These methods are not obligatory but suggested and teachers can expand the techniques. Teachers are suggested to consider class discussions, debates and group work activities, Project Works, making observations, preparing posters rather than reading or commenting on texts (MEB, RTÜK, 2006: p. 7).

In Ireland, the approaches and methodologies used in SPHE are crucial to the effectiveness of the curriculum. While some of the objectives of the curriculum can be achieved through more direct teaching, the emphasis in SPHE is on active learning. Active learning is the principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE. It requires children to actively participate in their learning in a wide variety of ways, thereby increasing the possibility of internalizing what they have explored and of being able to use the learning in their everyday lives. The strategies outlined in MLE are drama activities, co-operative games, exploring pictures and photographs, reading a photograph, using pictures as a stimulus for discussion or in determining previously acquired knowledge about an issue, ranking pictures, exploring a television advertisement, role-playing discussion, written activities, using recorded extracts from television, radio, and videos, and so on.

Media Education in Finland has been interested in different subject areas such as Mother Tongue Education, Linguistics and Art especially

Modern Art in a more detailed way. Teachers were left free to choose their own methods in lessons in accordance with the general objectives of school curricula. For Kupainen, Sintonen and Suoranta (2008), grammar school should intensify its civic education, increase the share of societal learning material, present economic questions and the political development, and pursue new teaching methods when these subjects are taught. Forging a link between the world of school and the society of the fully grown can best be achieved with the help of newspapers, radio and indeed television. They constitute the most important bond with the world of adults. The potential of newspapers has not been thoroughly explored although in various subjects individual teachers had conducted experiments Through communication and media subjects it is hoped to have the pupil express herself in a diverse and responsible manner and to interpret the communication of others; to develop information management skills and to compare, select and utilize information acquired, to take a critical attitude to the content conveyed by media and to contemplate the ethical and aesthetic values pertaining to them in communication, to produce and convey communications and to use media in an appropriate manner and to use the tools of communication and media in information acquisition, information transfer and in various interaction situations (Kupainen, Sintonen and Suoranta, 2008: p.16-17). Media education practices seem to depend more on individual events such as identifying theme days, produce projects etc.

As it can be seen, in learning situation dimension, in curricula of all three counties, learner-centered methods and activities such as acting-out, observation, making research, discussion, preparing posters are included most commonly. In this respect, it can be argued that methods and techniques which develop and reveal learners' critical thinking skills are included.

Evaluation and Assessment Knowledge

As for assessment of students' success in MLE, it is difficult to mention that there are an agreed criteria or standards for assessing media literacy. Ideally, evaluation in Media Education means student self-evaluation, both formative and summative. Indeed, Media Education attempts to change the relationship between teacher and students and taught by offering both objects for reflection and dialogue (Harland, 2004; Masterman, 1997).

Media literacy course is not evaluated by grades but if the student takes the course or not is specified in students' records in Turkey since MLE is focused on developing critical thinking skills. In order to evaluate the success of students or the efficacy of the lesson not only the outcome but also the process of teaching should be evaluated (MEB, 2006: p. 13). In the curriculum, it is defined that at the end of the each unit there should be a different assessment technique. In addition to traditional techniques such as filling the blanks, open ended question tests, matching and multiple choice tests, teachers are also encouraged to use student-centered methods such as observation, interviewing, questionnaire, self evaluation scales, portfolios, projects, preparing posters (MEB, RTÜK, 2006: p. 14).

In Ireland, historically, summative assessment in primary schooling has tended to focus more on measuring knowledge than on assessing competencies. However, the primary school curriculum encourages more formative approaches to the assessment of competencies within particular curriculum areas. There is no certification associated with primary schooling. Almost all primary schools use standardized tests to measure attainment in literacy and numeracy at least once a year. The NCCA report cited above suggests that in order to create greater space and possibilities for areas such as key skills, the curriculum at lower secondary level should become less prescribed over time with an emphasis placed on areas of experience over subject disciplines. These areas of experience could incorporate subjects and are listed as Language and Literature; Mathematical studies; Science and technology; Social, political and environmental education; Arts education; Physical education; Religious and moral education; Guidance, counseling and pastoral care (Eurydice Directorate, 2002).

Because there is no discrete course or unit due to media literacy education in Finland, there is not a special tool for measuring and evaluation process. However, the theme "Media Skills and Communication" is integrated into the other courses and general student-centered measurement and evaluation approaches are used in these courses. The assessment takes into account its own role in the learning process. Pupil assessment forms a whole, in which ongoing feedback from the teacher plays an important part. With the help of assessment, the teacher guides the pupils in becoming the aware of their thinking and action and helps them understand what they are learning. The pupil's progress, work

skills, and behavior are assessed in relation to the curriculum's objectives and descriptions of good performance. Students' self- assessment is also considered in this approach.

When analyzed the assessment and evaluation dimension, media literacy curriculum of Turkey includes alternative assessment approaches such as performance evaluation, self-evaluation, and portfolio instead of conventional assessment and evaluation methods. Learner's success is not expressed by giving scores, but by an expression which notes that the students took the course. In Ireland, there is a written evaluation both with a graduation certificate and language certificate. As this is a written examination, there is not an evaluation intended for practice. As there is an interdisciplinary approach in Finland, evaluation has a structure within the other courses which assesses both knowledge and skill and in addition to teacher's evaluation; learners' evaluation is also given importance.

Discussion

In this era in which information and technology develops rapidly, it is very important for children and youngsters to gain consciousness against the bombardment of mass media, to understand the messages in media correctly and to develop critical thinking skills. In this respect, it can be argued that appearance of MLE in primary curricula, which is a focus of interest especially in the last 5 years, is accepted a very positive development. Nevertheless, when primary education curricula of two European Union member countries (i.e., Finland and Ireland) which are pioneering in MLE according to the literature are compared to the Turkish Primary Education curricula, some differences are encountered.

The most important difference related to ML stems from the general understanding of school structure. Starting that course at a later age and presenting it in only one course is one of these differences. In other words, MLE starts at pre-school education in Ireland, First grade in Finland and Sixth grade in an elective course in Turkey. However, MLE should be understood as a skill-based education process. That's why it should be a long term education and begin at an early age, and also it should be integrated into different courses. For example, MLE is presented in a strand unit in SPHE Curriculum in Ireland and interdisciplinary manner within different lessons in Finland. It is

obvious that it is not possible to acquire skills within one term within an elective course only. As Hobbs (2004), Lemmen (2005) and Feilitzen (2004) state that MLE should be approached in both a cross-curricular and a subject-specific way integrated across the curriculum, not just in Mother tongue education or Media Studies.

The curricula of these countries differ in their general objectives and learning outcomes. There are not any objectives related to MLE in the vision of Primary school curricula of Turkey unlike Finland and Ireland Curricula. When considering the curriculum of each course, the objectives related to MLE are only implemented in Turkish Curriculum (1-5) and elective Media Literacy Course in the Secondary school in Primary education in Turkey although they take place in different courses in Finland and Ireland curricula. The general objectives associated with ML are very broad and are not possible to achieve within solely media literacy education but could be achieved in the vision of general objectives or vision of the primary education curricula. Therefore, the ideas in general objectives should be narrowed down and how these issues provided should be clearly stated in the curriculum. In addition, some concepts within the curricula of Ireland and Finland associated with ML such as active citizenship, Intercultural communication should find a place in Turkish curriculum.

In addition to this, the learning outcomes of Turkey's MLE curriculum seem to aim at mostly gaining knowledge and understanding the issues with a protectionist view focused on protecting child from the negative effects of the media especially television. Those learning outcomes should be more focused on developing skills, attitude, and values with the idea of provision and participation as it is in the curricula of Finland and Ireland.

Another difference between the curricula stems from the content knowledge. The content in elective ML course in Turkey is generally related to communication, newspaper, internet and especially television while the content is mostly focused on multi-media, computer games, movies, other digital tools, internet ethics, advertising and marketing in the curricula of Finland and Ireland. This is most probably because of the differences between learning environments and economical conditions in these countries. For example, there can be film making studies in the primary schools of Finland because they do not have oversized classrooms unlike Turkey.

In addition to all these differences, there are some similarities between the countries in terms of Learning Situation and Assessment and evaluation aspects. Methods and techniques suggested in MLE are all student oriented and tries to make the students active participants of the lessons. Similarly, the course assessment and evaluation tools used in every three curriculum are focused on the evaluation of the process as well as the result.

The concept of literacy has expanded even further with technological, social and environmental change. Media literacy aims at educating critical thinkers who are aware of the fact that mass media affect how their audiences think and behave. This can be provided with training programs organized in accordance with that aim. Within a short time it is obvious that those skills are not developed. That's why a media literacy curriculum should be skills-oriented, should spread to a longer time and should be presented in different courses in an interdisciplinary manner.

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